

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for comparing a left formatted file to a right formatted file, comprising:
 - detecting groups of characters in the left and right files;
 - normalizing the groups in the left and right files, wherein the normalizing step includes at least one of the steps of removing carriage returns and converting multiple sequential white spaces into a single white space;
 - comparing a group in the right file to a corresponding group in the left file to identify a modified group wherein some portion of the group is different between the left file and the right file; and
 - generating a comparison result file containing the modified groups as section of the comparison result file to maintain the formatting of the modified groups when placed in the comparison result file.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein detecting the groups in the files further comprises detecting and distinguishing tags in the files to determine the groups in the files.
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the files are HTML files and the tags are block-level HTML tags.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying the comparison result file to a user so that the user views the changed portion of the right file with formatting intact.
5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~5~~, wherein the normalization step further ~~comprises~~ includes the step of considering one or more rules for handling special elements in the files that would inhibit line-by-line comparison of the file.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein handling the special elements further comprises one or more of removing header tags from the files, removing script references from the files, removing intradocument links from the files, and converting relative URLs into absolute URLs in the file.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A method for comparing a left formatted file to a right formatted file of claim 5, comprising:

detecting groups of characters in the left and right files;

comparing a group in the right file to a corresponding group in the left file to identify a modified group wherein some portion of the group is different between the left file and the right file; and

generating a comparison result file containing the modified groups as section of the comparison result file to maintain the formatting of the modified groups when placed in the comparison result file;

wherein detecting the groups further comprises normalizing the right file and left file based on one or more rules in a rules database to permit line-by-line comparison of the right and left file despite the formatting in the files; and

wherein the comparison further comprises comparing the right file to the left file on a line-by-line basis wherein block level HTML elements in each file are treated as separate lines during the comparison.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the normalization further comprises processing each character of the right and left files.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the character processing further comprises detecting a preformatting start tag when scanning the document and

skipping the pre-formatted text contained between the start tag and a preformatting end tag.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the character processing further comprises one or more of removing carriage returns, converting multiple white spaces into a single white space, separating block level HTML elements into separate lines by inserting carriage returns before a block level start tag, and keeping text level tags on same line.

12. (Currently Amended) A system for comparing a left formatted file to a right formatted file, comprising:

means for detecting groups of characters in the left and right files;

a normalizer adapted to perform at least one of the steps of removing carriage returns from the left and right files and converting multiple sequential white spaces into a single white space in the left and right files;

means for comparing a group in the right file to a corresponding group in the left file to identify a modified group wherein some portion of the group is different between the left file and the right file; and

means for generating a comparison file containing the modified group as sections of the comparison result file to maintain the formatting of the modified groups when placed in the comparison result file.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the detecting means further comprises means for detecting and distinguishing tags in the files to determine the groups in the files.

14. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 13, wherein the files are HTML files and the tags are block-level HTML tags.

15. (Original) The system of claim 12 further comprising means for displaying the comparison result to a user so that the user views the changed portions of the right file with the formatting intact.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~14~~ 12, wherein the ~~detecting~~ ~~means further comprises a normalizer for processing~~ is adapted to process the right file and left file based on one or more rules in a rules database to permit line-by-line comparison of the right and left file despite the formatting in the files.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the normalizer further comprises one or more rules for handling special elements in the files that would inhibit the line-by-line comparison of the file.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 17, wherein the normalizer further comprises one or more of removing tags from the files, removing script references from the files, and removing intradocument links from the files, and converting relative URLs into absolute URLs in the file.

19. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the comparing means further comprises means for comparing the right file to the left file on a line-by-line basis wherein each block in each file is treated as a line during the comparison.

20. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein the normalizer further comprises a character processor that processes each character of the right and left files.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the character processor further comprises means for detecting a preformatting start tag when scanning the document and means for skipping the pre-formatted text contained between the start tag and a preformatting end tag.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the normalizing step further comprises the step of removing header tags from the files.

24. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the normalizing step further comprises the step of removing script references from the files.

25. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the normalizing step further comprises the step of removing intradocument links from the files.

26. (New) A method for comparing a left HTML file to a right HTML file, comprising the steps of:

detecting corresponding groups of characters in the left and right files, the detecting step including the step of scanning the respective file for a groups of characters, each of which begins with a block-level HTML tag, wherein block-level HTML tag is an HTML tag that breaks flow of text when an HTML document is rendered;

comparing a group in the right file to a corresponding group in the left file to identify a modified group wherein some portion of the group in the left file is different from the group the right file; and

generating a comparison result file reflecting at least a portion of the modified group.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, further comprising the step of normalizing corresponding groups in the left and right files, wherein the normalizing step include at least one step taken from a group consisting of, (a) a step of removing carriage returns and (b) a step of converting multiple sequential white spaces into a single white space, wherein the comparing step involves the step of comparing a normalized group in the right file to a corresponding normalized group in the left file to identify a modified

group wherein some portion of the normalized group in the left file is different from the normalized group the right file.

28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein the comparing step involves line-by-line comparison of the corresponding groups.

29. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the normalizing step includes the step of removing header tags from the files.

30. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the normalizing step includes the step of removing script references from the files.

31. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the normalizing step includes the step of removing intradocument links from the files.

32. (New) The method of claim 26, further comprising the step of normalizing corresponding groups in the left and right files, wherein:
the normalizing step include at least one step taken from a group consisting of, (a) a step of removing carriage returns, (b) a step of converting multiple sequential white spaces into a single white space, (c) a step of removing header tags from the files, (d) a step of removing script references from the files, and (e) a step of removing intradocument links from the files; and

wherein the comparing step involves the step of comparing a normalized group in the right file to a corresponding normalized group in the left file to identify a modified group wherein some portion of the normalized group in the left file is different from the normalized group the right file.